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House defense bill targets quality of life, readiness

WASHINGTON — The House passed its version of the fiscal 2001 defense authorization bill May 18. The bill targets improvements to military health care, addresses modernization and readiness shortfalls and funds a 3.7 percent pay raise for service members.

The bill, House Resolution 4205, authorizes \$309.9 billion in budget authority, an increase of \$4.5 billion over the president's defense budget request. The House bill now goes to the Senate for action.

"H.R. 4205 is a good start toward ensuring that America's military can meet the challenges that lie ahead and ensure the safety and security of all Americans well into the 21st century," said Chairman Floyd D. Spence, House Armed Services Committee.

Highlights of House Resolution 4205 include:

Health care — The bill restores pharmacy

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Basic military trainees practice donning gas masks during the readiness and nuclear-biological-chemical training portion of Warrior Week. House Resolution 4205, the fiscal 2001 DOD authorization bill, which passed May 18, addresses recruiting and retention issues. (U.S. Air Force photo by Robbin Cresswell)

AF announces changes to fitness test

WASHINGTON — The Air Force's annual cycle ergometry test will expand to include muscular fitness assessments using push-ups and crunches for all Air Force people beginning July 1.

"The Air Force is committed to enhancing the health, well being, and performance of every member," said Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Michael E. Ryan. "Total physical fitness includes cardiovascular capacity, muscular strength and endurance, flexibility and body composition."

The requirements for crunches are the

same for men and women depending on age, while push-up requirements will vary according to age and gender. Changes to the program will not affect unit testing schedules already in place. Pass/fail standards will be decided in January 2002 to allow for sufficient evaluation of the program's effectiveness.

"Everybody in today's Air Force needs to be ready and able to perform any task that's required of them because sometimes

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NEWSBYTES

Memorial Day

WASHINGTON — President Bill Clinton issued a memorandum re-emphasizing the importance of Memorial Day, May 29, to honor service members who gave their lives in defense of freedom.

Officials hope the observance of a "National Moment of Remembrance," such as pausing for one minute at 3 p.m. on Memorial Day, will be included to remember and reflect on the sacrifices made by so many to provide freedom for all.

If military programs for Memorial Day events do not allow for meeting this time requirement, the inclusion of a "National Moment of Remembrance" in currently scheduled activities, even though scheduled for other times during the day, will meet the intent of this White House initiative, officials said.

E-6, E-7 promotion lists

RANDOLPH AIR FORCE BASE, Texas (AFPC) — The Air Force will release technical and master sergeant promotion lists June 8 (June 9 for those units across the international date line).

Previously, the lists have been released by the first Thursday in June. However, this year the first Thursday falls June 1, in the midst of a four-day work week.

"Allowing local military personnel flights and unit commanders ample time to process the lists and get their people notified is an important step in promotion releases," said officials at the Air Force Personnel Center. "A June 8 announcement allows for the notification time needed, especially for a dual release, while a June 1 announcement does not."

The lists of those selected for promotion will be available on the AFPC home page at <http://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil> by 4 p.m. CST June 9.



Letters to the editor

U.S. Air Force Online News publishes letters based on their appeal to an Air Force-wide audience each week. Send your letter to the U.S. Air Force Online News staff by completing the online form at <http://www.af.mil/newspaper/>

Due to the number of letters, not all letters can be published. Letters may be edited for grammar and length. Only letters accompanied by a valid name and email address will be considered.

"A" for effort for CSAF

Gen. Michael E. Ryan, Air Force chief of staff, deserves an "A" for effort. As the father of a young airman, I'm amazed that the Air Force is barely holding its own in maintaining readiness strength. Pay and quality of life improvements are long overdue for these bright youngsters! Senior leadership must continue to fight for them, or we're all in deep trouble. General Ryan does well for speaking up, but more is needed in other areas to maintain their trust.

W.R. McGarvey
New Jersey

Feeling left out, forgotten

The monetary windfall being lavished on new recruits also sends a very clear signal to that small, forgotten active-duty group now around retirement age who have only the meager educational benefits afforded by the Veterans Educational Assistance Program. That message is that the Air Force no longer considers them important — at least not important enough to spend the money to make them eligible for the Montgomery GI Bill.

Christopher Shock
Eielson AFB, Alaska

(Editor's note: See "Congress proposes GI Bill expansion" in this issue for an update on VEAP.

AF leaders Getting younger every year

By Lt. Col. Thomas Breen
Cannon Air Force Base, N.M.

Twenty years ago this June, I sat in a place called Arnold Hall at the Air Force Academy and listened to a man named Gen. "Chappie" James.

I'll never forget his words as this giant of a man looked down upon us. "You are the future leaders of the Air Force." I'll also never forget how stupid I thought that was. I looked around at 1,300 bald heads and wondered if everyone else was as afraid as I to leave their room to go to the latrine. How could any of us be the future leaders of anything?

I spent the next eight years really learning to follow. You have to be a good follower before you can be a good leader.

Four long years at the Academy and four more working my way up to become an A-10 flight "lead." Next thing I know, I'm leading an eight-ship into Germany from England and the weather was, as usual, very bad. For the first time, I was the guy out front making the tough calls.

I was also the guy who was going to "hang" if we ran out of gas or hit a mountain. I started to understand what the good general was talking about. The way I see it, it took me eight years to really be in a position of "leadership."

Since I became a squadron commander, I think I understand this leadership idea a lot better. So I look around my squadron and try to figure out who the leaders are. Who are the guys out there motivating people to bust their hump to get a job done, making sure it is done right, and who do I hold accountable?

I first look to the people who are in leadership positions. These are the maintenance officer, operations officer, maintenance superintendent, flight commanders, flight chiefs, element chiefs, etc. All super



Daniel ("Chappie") James, Jr.

individuals who have been around, have had some leadership training, and who you would expect to be considered leaders. And they are.

I know I have to look further. There is a lot more going on out there. I know the people training, motivating and setting the examples for all my followers are more than the people I have listed above. I know the seven minor miracles that happen every day to get a sortie in the air are not being done completely by these people. The problem is, I am out of leadership positions, and

there is a lot more leadership going on.

I have a policy in my squadron — everyone who has to have a waiver to perform tasks above which they are qualified sits down with me and their supervisor, and I give them my philosophy speech. I tell them that in the "old days," airmen would never have dreamed of being waived. There would be 10 staffs and techs doing this job, and they were at least a year or two too young and inexperienced.

But times are different now, and I have to depend on them to pick up the slack. We have no more staffs and techs. So, before I "waive" them to this higher level, there have got to be some things made clear. They know when they leave my office they have the authority, responsibility and duty to do what is correct, regardless of their rank. They also know they will be held as accountable for the dereliction of that duty as if they were an NCO.

One day during one of these interviews, I realized where the rest of my leaders are. They are two- and three-strippers who hadn't even been to leadership school! They are the guys who are doing just as I had on that snowy day in Germany. They are the ones now responsible for safe mission accomplishment.

This article is available in its entirety online.



AF announces changes to fitness test

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we're called upon to do things that are not part of our normal, everyday job," said Tech. Sgt. Roy A. Grubbs, Altus Air Force Base, Okla. "This fitness test should do a better job of ensuring people's overall fitness."

According to General Ryan, the changes are important in assessing force enhancement and to ensure compliance with Defense Department instructions.

"Physical fitness remains an essential component of combat readiness and expeditionary competence," he said. "We will continue to research methods to improve the health and performance of the force."

General reaction thus far to the new fitness standard has been positive with most people agreeing that cycle testing alone is not a true measure of a person's physical fitness.

"I would rather see a wide variety of physical standards tested rather than a single aerobics standard," said Special Agent Matthew Komatsu, from Altus AFB. "When it comes to



The Air Force's current fitness standard measures cardiovascular health and endurance. Beginning July 1, the new standard will also incorporate push-ups and stomach crunches to test for strength and flexibility.

A chart with the number of crunches and push-ups by age and gender is available online.

a deployment situation, your aerobic and anaerobic fitness will be important. If you're going to test fitness, you can't get a good feeling for someone's overall fitness unless you're going to test both."

"It's a good idea," said Senior Airman Jack Jimenez, from the David Grant Medical Center at Travis AFB, Calif. "(The new tests) will motivate people to get in shape, because they will have to work out to pass."

But for some, the new standards still don't go far enough. "They're not challenging enough," said Senior Airman Sean Mace, a fitness consultant at Travis. "The standards still don't assess a person's health well enough."

This article is available in its entirety online.

Congress proposes GI Bill expansion

By Staff Sgt. A. J. Bosker

Headquarters United States Air Force

WASHINGTON – A current congressional proposal would expand the total Montgomery GI Bill benefits for service members from the current 36 month total of \$19,296 to \$25,920, according to Jim Sweizer, chief of the Voluntary Education Branch, Directorate of Personnel Force Development, Headquarters Air Force.

The proposal, if voted into law, would increase the basic benefit for full-time students from \$536 per month to \$600 per month beginning Oct. 1, 2000, Mr. Sweizer said. By Oct. 1, 2001, the benefit would increase to \$720 per month. Additionally, part-time students would also see a proportional increase.

The intent of the Montgomery GI Bill is to help veterans continue their education, according to Mr. Sweizer.

To achieve this, the proposal would also provide service members who are still enrolled in the Veterans Educational Assistance

Program another opportunity to convert to the Montgomery GI Bill, he said.

"Almost 19,000 Air Force members were denied conversion to the GI Bill in 1996 when they were first offered the option to convert," he said. "Most were denied because they had no money in their VEAP account. Under VEAP, once you made a \$25 contribution, you could withdraw your investment and pay into the account at a later date. The government would then double any money, up to \$2,700, paid into the account. The way the law was written in 1996, those who had withdrawn their money were not permitted to convert to the Montgomery GI Bill."

Servicemembers who choose to convert from VEAP to the Montgomery GI Bill will need to pay \$2,700, Mr. Sweizer said.

In addition to continuing education, the new proposal would permit the Montgomery GI Bill benefits to pay fees for civilian occupational licensing or certification tests, he said.

JSF demonstrators slated to begin flying

By Staff Sgt. A. J. Bosker

Headquarters United States Air Force

WASHINGTON – Competitors for the Air Force's newest multi-role aircraft, the Joint Strike Fighter, will begin flying their concept demonstrators in the next few months according to service officials.

Boeing and Lockheed Martin are competing for the contract. Selection of the winning airframe will be made early next year with deliveries of the first aircraft beginning in 2005 and initial operational capability beginning in 2010.

Tagged to replace an aging fighter fleet, the JSF will fulfill a future ground-attack role, with air superiority provided by the F-22 Raptor.

The Air Force needs the Joint Strike Fighter to replace its aging fleet of F-16s and A-10s, according to Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Michael E. Ryan. "This will ensure that young Air Force men and women always will have the advantage of technologically superior weapons. We never want a fair fight; we want the odds to be 100 to 1 in our favor."

This article is available in its entirety online.

President approves Kosovo Campaign Medal

WASHINGTON – A campaign medal for service members who served for 30 consecutive days or more in Kosovo was approved by President Bill Clinton May 19.

The Kosovo Campaign Medal and campaign streamers were approved to recognize the accomplishments of service members who participated in, or were in direct support of either or both the Kosovo Air Campaign and the Kosovo Defense Campaign, according to Department of Defense officials.

Participation in, or support of, one or more of the following Kosovo operations qualifies for wear of the KCM: Allied Force, Joint Guardian, Allied Harbor, Sustain Hope/Shining Hope, Noble Anvil, Kosovo Task Force Hawk, Task Force Saber, or Task Force Hunter.

This article is available in its entirety online.



Civilian leadership programs offer career opportunities

By Staff Sgt. Cynthia Miller

Headquarters United States Air Force

WASHINGTON – The Air Force is looking for about 170 civilian employees in grades GS-12 through GS-15 to participate in two ongoing leadership and management programs in 2001.



Air Force civilian leadership development programs are designed to assist civilian employees, like David L. McGlassen, a GS-13 at Wilford Hall Medical Center clinical research laboratory, Lackland Air Force Base, Texas, make the most of their careers through education and training.

Under the Air Force Civilian Competitive Development program, the service will select 100 to 110 candidates nominated by senior leaders to participate in career broadening activities, while under the Defense Leadership and Management program 50 to 60 qualified candidates will be selected.

According to Greg Den Herder, deputy director of personnel force management, initiatives offered through these leadership development programs include increased opportunities for education, training and development, relocation bonuses to help offset the cost of geographic moves and an increased number of professional military education seats for civilian employees.

Taking a cue from active-duty career development programs, the CCDP and DLAMP offer a framework wherein civilian employees can manage their careers to reach their maximum leadership potential.

Commanders must submit their nominations for both programs to the Air Force Senior Executive Matters Office by Aug. 18. CCDP selections will be announced in November with DLAMP selections named in December.

This article is available in its entirety online.

GS grouping minimizes civilian career stagnation

WASHINGTON – To help minimize civilian career stagnation, General Service grades are grouped into different levels and assigned minimum requirements for progression.

"This is a basic model," said Greg Den Herder, deputy director of personnel force management. "Recognizing that some career fields have unique requirements, this leadership model offers a general guideline on where you should be in your career

based on the number of years in service and pay grade."

Without a specific career path, 20-year civil servant, Joan Farnum, chief of program support for space and C3I systems directorate at Hill AFB, Utah jumped at opportunities as they were presented and hoped for the best. "This framework should help people just starting out in their civilian careers," she said.

This article is available in its entirety online.

AF releases chronic critical skills list

RANDOLPH AIR FORCE BASE, Texas (AFPC) – Airmen in 19 specialty fields listed on the Air Force's 2000 Chronic Critical Shortage skills list will receive slightly higher promotion rates than the rest of the enlisted force.

The CCS is designed to help reduce staff, technical and master sergeant shortages in certain sortie-generating and readiness-related skills by giving airmen eligible for promotion to these noncommissioned officer grades a promotion advantage, according to Air Force Personnel Center officials.

Specifically, people in CCS skills are promoted at 1.2 times the Air Force average. For example, if the Air Force average for a particular promotion cycle is 15 percent, then people holding CCS skills are promoted at an 18 percent rate.

This article is available in its entirety online.

House defense bill targets quality of life, readiness

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access to all Medicare-eligible military retirees, and paves the way toward a permanent healthcare program for military retirees over age 65 in 2004. A provision also extends TRICARE Prime Remote coverage to family members and eliminates co-payments for active duty family members under TRICARE Prime.

Pay raise – The bill calls for a 3.7 percent military pay raise effective Jan. 1, 2001.

Housing costs – Funding to reduce out-of-pocket housing costs for service members to less than 15 percent.

Targeted subsistence benefit – Up to \$500 per month allocated to assist the most economically challenged service members.

This article is available in its entirety online.



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